

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 403
Washington, DC 20004-1701
USA

Telephone 202 628 8421
Fax 202 628 8424
E-mail:oitp@alawash.org

Office for Information
Technology Policy

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ALA American Library Association

October 23, 1996

Mark Nadel
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street Room 542
Washington, DC 20554

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Re: Ex Parte Presentation
CC Docket No: 96-46, Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service
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Dear Mr. Nadel:

This is in response to your request for information regarding the ability of libraries to define their jurisdictional areas for purposes of identifying whether they serve low income or economically disadvantaged areas. According the National Center for Education Statistics March 1996 Technical Report, Public Library Structure and Organization in the United States, over 67% of public library systems classify themselves as affiliated with a municipal or county government. Another 7% are operated as multi-jurisdictional entities operated by two or more local governments under an intergovernmental agreement, 6% operate as part of special library district. Only 4% are affiliated with a school or school district.

In addition I have included an attachment providing a sampling of libraries currently involved in the Libraries Online! project, a joint project between the American Library Association and Microsoft to bring information technologies to underserved areas. As you can see, these libraries were able to supply census and demographic information about their service areas, including the number of census tracts served by particular branches.

I hope this information meets your needs and please feel free to call me should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



J. Andrew Magpantay
Office for Information Technology Policy
American Library Association

Attachment

CC: Mr. William F. Caton

Sampling of the areas that Libraries Online! library sites serve:

Baltimore County Public Library

The Essex Library is located in the heart of Essex/Middle River (see map), which has been designated by the Baltimore County administration as a priority area for coordinated, multi-disciplinary community conservation action in hopes of stemming a downward spiral into poverty.

Demographic characteristics:

Population 63,000, density 13.7 per acre.

9 census tracts have median household incomes less than 80% of county median.

5 census tracts have housing greater than 40 years old.

Average value of homes is less than \$90,000.

Percentage of rental housing nearly 50% -- more than a third build prior to 1950.

5 of the ten county elementary schools serving the most free and reduced lunches are in this area.

9 of 17 schools have unsatisfactory levels of attendance as measured by the State of Maryland.

Fewer than 14% of graduating seniors plan to attend a four-year college.

3 of the elementary schools have a turnover rate of more than 60%.

20% of children live in poverty.

50% of households do not own transportation.

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Brooklyn Public Library

The Flatbush Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, the site selected for this project, is located on Linden Boulevard and a half block from Flatbush Avenue, a main artery and one of the busiest commercial strips in all of New York City. The Library was constructed in 1905, the sixth Andrew Carnegie library in Brooklyn. It serves a very large and diverse community. The population of the surrounding community is over 93,000 with 49% foreign born. According to the 1990 census, the Flatbush branch serves a predominantly (over 75%) Black population. The community is well-known as a center for West Indian culture and life.

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Charlotte and Mecklenburg County Public Library

West Boulevard Branch: The Westside area is comprised of four census tracts and 10 neighborhoods containing 12,962 people. Poverty rates for the area range from 25% to more than 35%.

City View Branch: The user profile for the City View Branch Library reflects the area's rich diversity and includes an estimated 25% African American, 25% Caucasian, with the remaining 50% made up of East Indian, Native American, Asian and Hispanic families.

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Los Angeles Public Library

Demographic information using the 1990 census and library surveys:

The area served by the Cahuenga Branch Library:

52% Latino, 22% white, 20% Asian/Pacific Islander.

27% of the population is under 17 years of age.

80% is classified as "low income."

Languages other than English spoken: Spanish, Armenian, Tagalog, and Russian.

The area served by the Pio Pico Koreatown Branch Library:

75% Latino, 17% Asian/Pacific Islander, 5% white.

28% of the population is under 17 years of age.

80% is classified as "low income."

Languages other than English spoken: Spanish and Korean.

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Mississippi Library Commission

There are 18 sites. They provided information (population, age breakdown, employment, per capita income, education) for each of the sites.

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South Dakota State Library

There are 22 sites in operation. The public libraries in towns of 5,000 population or more are full members of the south Dakota Library Network. In addition to those, they targeted a selected group of smaller libraries serving especially rural, remote communities including at least two Indian reservation communities.

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Tucson-Pima Public Library

The Valencia, Woods, and Mission Branch libraries are all located in parts of Tucson characterized by higher than average unemployment, low family income and educational attainment, and high adult and youth illiteracy.

Here are some illustrative demographic facts:

In Valencia's service area, children represent 30% of the total population and 10% of these children (all races) live below the poverty line. In comparison, 5.9% of all Tucson children live below the poverty line.

Of all families living in Valencia's service area, 21% of white families, 35.7% of Hispanic families and 65% of Native American families are below the poverty line. One of Valencia's six census tracts is 86-93% Native American.

Again in Valencia's service area, 38.8% of the population speak Spanish, .9% Native American languages and 42.6% speak English at home.

Within Mission's service area there is one of the largest concentrations in the city of persons 16-19 years of age who are not in school and who have no high school diploma.

October 8, 1996

Andrew Magpantay
Director of the Office of Information Technology Policy
ALA Washington Office
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Suite 403
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Andrew:

The Libraries Online! project works with library systems to target underserved communities and hopes to establish best practices for implementing information technology into libraries.

In the course of the Libraries Online! project, when asked for demographic information, our library partners were able to supply us with relevant information as you will see on the attached pages. It is our experience that libraries have made successful use of census information to target community outreach efforts.

Sincerely,

Molly Callender
Project Manager
Libraries Online!

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